

Night Thoughts, by Edward Young

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(This might have been filmed for the 27th season, if Dr Who hadn't been cancelled after Survival.)

[Part One]

DICKENS: Administering mixture of nitrous oxide, CO2 and cyclopropane. (hiss of gas) Patient now under and breathing steadily. Check endotracheal tube.

DEACON: (a woman) Prepare to operate, Mister Hartley, prepare to operate.

HARTLEY: I can't. I'm not qualified. She'd die.

DICKENS: Blood pressure?

DEACON: Normal, Major.

DICKENS: But you must, Mister Hartley. We agreed. It's your turn!

(The Tardis materialises, door opens.)

ACE: What is this? Ham or turkey?

DOCTOR: If you can't tell the difference, Ace, it doesn't matter.

ACE: You're the boss.

(Door closes.)

ACE: Who rattled his cage?

HEX: Are you sure he's all right?

ACE: You tell me, you're the medic. Doctor? Hex thinks you're ill.

DOCTOR: There it is again.

ACE: What?

DOCTOR: That pain. Almost a taste of death.

HEX: Here you are, I've got some paracetamol in me pocket.

DOCTOR: No, no, it wasn't physical. But not mental either.

ACE: Well, that rules out your ham sarnies at least. (Bugs Bunny) Eh, what's up, Doc?

DOCTOR: The night air. It's bad.

HEX: He's right. There is something bad about this place. You know, I'm not one for dreams or reading too much into them, but...

ACE: Hey. I thought I saw the lake bubble.

DOCTOR: You were saying, Hex? About a dream?

RADIO: Public service workers' leaders have warned there'll be more power cuts today, along with ambulance and...

(Radio turned off.)

DICKENS: Can you hear me now? Yes. No. I don't care how bad the weather is, man, you guaranteed you would have that thesis in my hands by ten, it's now ten thirty, where is it? No. That will not suffice. I don't care if the whole world's on strike. We ... Hello? Perkins? If you've hung up on me...

(Clicking of telephone to reconnect.)

DICKENS: Dash it! Deacon? Sue!

SUE: Snap!

DEACON: I must say, Sue, I've never played it with these sort of cards. What do you call them? Tarot Cards?

DICKENS: Ah, Deacon. Tell the girl that if she's not back at the stove with an eye on the now-boiling milk, there will be no pay this week. Lord knows how long the power will be off. I will not have us wasting the gas we do have. Now, move.

DEACON: Well, she...

DICKENS: What?

DEACON: She hadn't forgotten the milk. I ... we...

DICKENS: Had you, Sue? When I agreed you could join us here, girl, I laid down some strict guidelines. And a month's long enough for you to find your way round.

DEACON: Major, Sue's had a rough time of it. Shouting at her as she finds her feet around here won't help, you know.

DICKENS: Nonsense. Don't worry about me, Sue. I'm all shouting and hot air. Now, tell me truthfully, and I'll know if you're lying. Military training and all that. Did you forget...?

SUE: No, Major Dickens. No. Cross my heart and hope to die.

(Leaves.)

O'NEILL: Perhaps the most positive suggestion I've heard all day.

DEACON: Ah, Doctor O'Neill. Good evening.

DICKENS: As usual, arriving just as the action's been resolved.

O'NEILL: Well actually, I've come downstairs to say good night. The lines are down, the candles are ready for their orders, a squadron of hot water bottles is on standby, and I'm leaving you in full operational command, sah! I'm off to bed.

DICKENS: That's right, man. Desert us all. Just leave us to run the show.

O'NEILL: I simply believe that faced with the prospect of an isolated and cold few days, the best ally is tired Nature's sweet restorer. Sleep, Major Dickens. Sleep.

DICKENS: Nutter. (receding) Now, Sue? How is our milk getting on? I do...

(Door closes.)

DEACON: You know, you must watch yourself. He's not used to anyone questioning his judgement.

O'NEILL: He's nothing more than a clockwork soldier, and I like winding him up. I notice he's beginning to get on your West Ham Reserves too, isn't he, Deacon?

DEACON: Yes. But then the four of us go back a long way. A long, long way.

DOCTOR: Go on, Hex. Tell me what's on your mind.

HEX: Well, it was last night. I had the most vivid dream. Well, nightmare actually. A weird group of guys in an operating theatre.

DOCTOR: Not unsurprising, perhaps, given your background.

HEX: No, this was different. Sort of a makeshift thing. Olde-worlde. Like it was a bunch of well-meaning amateurs.

DOCTOR: What happened?

HEX: That was just it. There was a toy. You know, a kid's doll on a table, and a guy called Hatey, or something - No, no, Harty, I think, and they were trying to force him to operate. And then... (sighs) It was horrible. He just...

ACE: (distant) Help!

DOCTOR: She's fallen in the lake. Ace!

HEX: Ace?

HEX: There's nothing'. Not a sign.

(Water moves, Ace coughing.)

HEX: Ace. Thank God.

DICKENS: Ah Hartley, there you are. Now, where the hell's the Bursar got to, Deacon, hmm? Pardon my French and all that.

DEACON: She went out with a torch to assess the storm damage. The phones and electric are both down. So we'd better work out our back-payments to the Almighty, and have an evening of quiet prayer, then an early night.

DICKENS: Well put, Deacon. But the Bursar should never have been allowed to leave the building in her condition. She could be hit by a falling tree.

HARTLEY: (cough) With respect, Major Dickens, we must let her retain her independence. A woman in a wheelchair is no more likely to be hit by a tree than one who can walk.

DICKENS: No, Mister Hartley, I will not accept that. The Bursar is putting all our lives at risk by going out in these conditions. Perhaps, Deacon, you would oblige me by doing sentry duty by the window.

ACE: It was horrible. Oh! It was in the lake.

HEX: What, Ace? I mean, what - what - what was in the lake?

ACE: This, this thing.

DOCTOR: Rewind a little. Describe what's happening as you reach the lake.

ACE: Well, creeping up, because there's this rippling, like someone's skinny-dipping or something. And as I look at the water - oh, it's so black - I think I see someone. Just a face, lying submerged beneath the surface. Drowned. Yeah. It was a woman drowning.

HEX: So, you jump in? Wow. Good sensible move, that.

DOCTOR: Mister Hex!

ACE: Anyway, I can feel the weeds. I'm getting caught in the weeds and I can't get out. The more I pull, the more it pulls me down. Then, suddenly, I'm free.

DOCTOR: A nasty shock for anyone.

HEX: Let's just get you back to the Tardis.

DOCTOR: Oh, why not there?

HEX: Where?

DOCTOR: Where? Just there, you know, that house. I mean, it's closer and hopefully, nice and warm.

DICKENS: Deacon? What can you see out there? Better, or worse?

DEACON: Worse. Seems like hurricanes Alison to Zachariah are brewing up for a Biblical storm.

HARTLEY: Look. There are three men coming towards the house.

DICKENS: Don't be a fool, Hartley. In this weather?

DEACON: No. Look. One's a woman.

DICKENS: Well, jump to it, then. They could die out there. Hartley? Haul 'em in.

(Door opens.)

HARTLEY: Good evening .

DOCTOR: Good evening. I'm sorry to trouble you...

(Door closes.)

DOCTOR: ... but my friend has had a bit of a shock. She's wet to the bone.

HEX: I'm worried about her temperature,. If we could just spend an hour here until she warms up...

HARTLEY: You're going nowhere tonight, young lady. A hot bath and a warm bed may just prevent you from catching your death of...

DICKENS: One moment. We don't know this woman from Eve. These people could be common thieves. I must warn you that this house is alarmed. A system of my own design.

DOCTOR: The human race seems to have perfected everything, except itself.

DICKENS: Smile when you say that, sir.

HARTLEY: Ah, Bursar. Welcome home. We have some guests for the night.

ACE: I'm Ace McShane. These are my partners in crime, Hex and the Doctor. I just need a hot bath and some kip. Anywhere'll do.

BURSAR: Good evening. I'm the Bursar. Forgive me if I don't get up.

HARTLEY: She seems to have had an accident by the lake, Bursar. Here. Come with me, Miss McShane.

ACE: (receding) Oh. It's just Ace. Thanks, by the way.

HEX: Doctor, that man Hartley. I think the man in the dream was...

DOCTOR: Let's talk later.

BURSAR: What were you doing out on a night like this?

DOCTOR: We were lost, Bursar.

BURSAR: But what were you doing?

DOCTOR: Trying to become un-lost.

BURSAR: Ah. The Deacon has broken the ice. Sustenance.

DEACON: Here. These'll warm you up. There you are, Doctor, Hex. Come and sit by the fire.

DEACON: So, you're a Doctor, eh?

DOCTOR: Yes.

HEX: No, I'm a staff nurse.

DICKENS: Both medical men. So am I. Trained as an anaesthetist in the Army. And what is your field?

DOCTOR: Oh, the science of macro-cosmology, I suppose.

DEACON: Really?

DOCTOR: Well, mainly. I dabble.

HARTLEY [OC]: I'm sorry it's a little dusty. It hasn't been slept in for a while. But the linen's clean.

ACE: Oh, it's kind of you to do anything. This is great.

(Moving things about.)

HARTLEY [OC]: You're lucky, you know. Few people know we're here. You could have roamed for miles and not find a living soul. I like your ear studs, by the way. Expensive, yes?

ACE: Er, should I feel a bit creeped out that you can spot them that well from in there?

HARTLEY [OC]: (laughs) In my line of work I need first-rate eyesight. I tend to notice these things. Sorry. Didn't mean to creep you out.

(Door opens.)

HARTLEY: Now, do you prefer Radox or bath oil?

ACE: Ah! Oh. Don't you just love the smell of old wood? Mister Hartley, look. Is that a mum and her daughter? Aren't they pretty? Mmm, not sure about the matching jogging suits, though. Glad my mum never dressed me up to look the same as she did. Why is it hidden in here? Looks like it should be on someone's mantelpiece.

HARTLEY: Who the hell put that there? (coughs) Let me, er, take that away with me. I'm sorry, Miss McShane. (cough) Not all photographs bring happy memories.

HEX: Ah, I love the hunting trophies. Fish, birds. What's that thing with the antlers?

DEACON: We're jolly proud of them, especially the fish.

DOCTOR: Tell me, what's the history of that stuffed bear?

BURSAR: Just a collector's item. We...

DEACON: British Empire collectible. I...

BURSAR: Full of old Kleenex or sugar or spice or who knows? We...

DICKENS: We do a bit of fishing in the lake, Hex. That specimen up there I'm particularly pleased with. Do

either of you fish?

HEX: Not hugely, no.

DICKENS: I've always felt that the greatest asset in fishing is caution.

DOCTOR: Especially if you're a fish.

DICKENS: That may be so. Now, more hot drinks.

(Leaves.)

DOCTOR: Deacon, I didn't catch who you all were.

DEACON: Oh, we're all from the University. Which of course is closed for the winter break. We run a few experiments down here. Mainly medical. Hence the Major. But Mister Hartley is a taxidermist by trade, though he lectures in veterinary science. The Bursar and I are here merely to jolly everyone along. Oh. And Doctor O'Neill. He's new here. English Lit, I think, but he went to bed when the storm started. Now, do tell. Who are you?

DOCTOR: Me? Oh. I'm a traveller.

DEACON: A traveller? How interesting.

DOCTOR: Yes. I like to experience. Experience and observe. And yet I've found the more things change, the more they stay the same. Long ago, there were once some doctors, like you, like us, who eagerly experimented on the life of an aged bear they had bagged. He was dying anyway, they believed. First, they played music and the bear did not dance. Then, with the rope that one of them was carrying the bear's left leg was tied to a post. This time the bear danced merrily to the tune, and continued to jig, jig, jig along after the music had stopped. Therefore, the learned academics concluded, bears like to be ensnared. Jig, jig, jig. And then, they set upon its eyes...

DEACON: No!

BURSAR: It's all right, Deacon. It's been a long day. We'd best be retiring now. Good night to you all.

DEACON: I'll go too. Many, many apologies for the scene. I'm just a little over-tired. Hex, let me show you to your room.

HEX: Well, I'm...

DOCTOR: Off you go, Mister Hex. Nighty-night.

HEX: Okay. Night then, Doctor, everyone.

DOCTOR: Now, Bursar. Do you need a hand?

BURSAR: Thankfully, the stair-lift is independently powered. But you could give me a hand getting me onto the er...

DOCTOR: Yes. Yes...

BURSAR: Yes. I'm airborne. But Doctor, walk up with me as I travel?

DOCTOR: Of course, Bursar.

BURSAR: I apologise for the Deacon's behaviour. She's had a tough few years. Out in the Falklands, you know. That's where she met the Major. I gather they both left the Army together. Bit of an incident.

DOCTOR: Incident?

BURSAR: Oh, not like that. Can't imagine the Deacon and the Major like that. (laughs) No. Something went wrong during the Falklands War. They both took the blame. Been trying to make up for it ever since, both of them. Save our souls, the Deacon once said. I never asked anything else. Seemed too rude. She's nice, though. One of the few female military chaplains. Your story would have reminded her of one young Corporal who... Still, that's blood under the bridge now.

DOCTOR: Ah, I see. Obviously I wasn't to know. How interesting.

(Splashes of water, Ace humming. Knock on door.)

ACE: Who is it? I'll be out in a sec.

(Gets out of water.)

ACE: All right, all right! Oh Jeez, let me at least get a towel.

(Door opens.)

ACE: Hello. Hello?

(Distant sobbing.)

ACE: Hello?

(Door opens.)

ACE: Hello?

HEX: Ace.

ACE: Hex. Oh, it wasn't you, was it?

HEX: What?

ACE: That sobbing.

HEX: What sobbing? Oh, thanks a lot. Hey! I love the dressing gown. Very retro.

ACE: Yeah. I heard someone crying when I was in the bathroom. I thought it was you with another of your nightmares.

HEX: Perhaps it was the stair-lift.

ACE: Yeah, 'cause I can't tell the difference. I suppose that's for the, er, Bursar, was it? Very Thora Hird.

HEX: Thora who?

ACE: Oh, never mind. Where have they put you for the night?

HEX: Oh ... back down there.

ACE: Huh!

DOCTOR [OC]: Ace? If you're decent, would you come down for a minute? We're in the main hall.

ACE: (tuts) Oh, what have I done now?

HEX: I'll leave you to it, then. Night.

ACE: Night.

ACE: Reporting for duty, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Nice dressing-gown, very...

ACE: Yeah, retro. It's been mentioned. Mister Hartley, I thought I heard sobbing coming from a room upstairs.

HARTLEY: That would be Sue. She's working here during the holidays. She turned up here one day and Major Dickens saw fit to take her on. She cries a fair bit.

DOCTOR: The tears of a child. The greatest water power known to Man. Remember that. Come and sit over here. Now, you say you heard sobbing.

ACE: I remember my mum crying for days when my gran died.

DOCTOR: Which grandmother? Kathleen?

ACE: Yeah.

DOCTOR: Mmm.

ACE: Anyway, I was only three but the memory's sort of burned onto my mind. That's how the sobbing went on just now. And I think I heard the girl say something.

DOCTOR: Particulars are not to be looked at until we examine the whole.

HARTLEY: You may need to make allowances for my colleagues. Some of them are not well.

DOCTOR: One of them has cancer. Cancer of the soul.

HARTLEY: You don't think much of Major Dickens, do you?

DOCTOR: Let me ponder that question, Mister Hartley, as I find some hot chocolate to warm *our* souls.

ACE: Good thinking, Batman.

(Door closes.)

HARTLEY: Your friend seems intelligent, and wise.

ACE: Yeah. He's smarter than the average bear.

(Door opens and closes.)

DICKENS: Ah, Mister Hartley and guests.

DOCTOR: Major Dickens. We were just coming to bid you good night. Time to turn in, I think, Ace.

ACE: Hey, what happened to my hot chocolate?

DOCTOR: Ace.

ACE: Oh, all right. Night, all.

(The clock chimes twice.)

HARTLEY: Good night.

DICKENS: Yes, we should all have been in bed long ago. But I'll be up in the morning before the lot of you. I'm an early bird.

DOCTOR: (sotto) And who, I wonder, are your worms?

DICKENS: So, this is to be a battle of the minds, is it, Doctor?

DOCTOR: So nice of you to come unarmed.

(Clock chimes four. Ace is making a drink.)

ACE: Oh! You scared me.

DOCTOR: Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly.

ACE: Oh, it's only a snack, Doctor. It is nearly breakfast time.

DOCTOR: I'd hoped you'd have the sense to stay in your room until dawn. Ace, I warn you, things could get very nasty here before they get better.

ACE: You mean Major Dickens?

DOCTOR: No, no. He can't be the hunter. Makes too much noise, like a driver in the fog. He who is sure he is right can afford to keep quiet.

ACE: Well, at least things don't get boring round here. Listen, can we talk?

DOCTOR: Always.

ACE: Over the years, you and me, we've been through a lot together, right? So, what happened down by the lake - well, what I saw - I should have been able to, to take it, not bottle it up. But it won't go away. It's like this whole place is trying to...

DOCTOR: Don't worry, Ace. I knew how you were feeling.

ACE: I don't see how. I hadn't said anything.

DOCTOR: That's how I knew. The dog that didn't bark. Go on, back to bed.

ACE [OC]: Calling me a dog now?

DOCTOR [OC]: Ruff!

(Tape rewinds.)

DOCTOR: (recording) Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly.

(Rewinding of tape.)

DOCTOR: (recording) Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly.

(Five o'clock.)

HARTLEY: Hello? Is anybody down there? It's me, Joe Hartley. Were you calling for me? Again? It's so dark, I, I can't see. Let me light a candle, hang on.

(Lights candle. Coughs. A door creaks open.)

HARTLEY: Oh, I see. Down there. I had thought you were here in the main hall as normal but well, you know, I, er (coughs.) God, I hate candles. And cellars.

DOCTOR: (recording) Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly.

HARTLEY: Doctor? No. Ah. I hear you. You *are* in the cellar.

(Heavy breathing.)

HARTLEY: Please, don't hurt me. I've told you before. It wasn't me, it was the others. I argued your case.

Please, leave me in peace. Go away!

(Hartley screams and falls. Door closes. Whistling, possibly Oranges and Lemons.)

O'NEILL: Good morning, good morning. You must be Mister Hex.

HEX: Er, just Hex, please.

O'NEILL: I'm Doctor Colin O'Neill. This is Sue, who was sixteen last Wednesday, and this is Sue's toy rabbit, Happy.

HAPPY: Hello, Hex.

HEX: What are you, Sue? Ventriloquist?

O'NEILL: Fancy some bacon and eggs?

HEX: Mmm, sure. Hey, my dad used to tell me a funny story about a rabbit and a dog, actually.

O'NEILL: Well, perhaps a bit later, eh...?

HAPPY: Tell it now!

HEX: Voice scares me sh... Well, scares me anyway. Look, can you put the toy down and just talk normal for five minutes, eh?

HAPPY: Tell it. Tell the story.

O'NEILL: Might be a good idea.

HEX: Nah. Thinking about it, not one for a kid, really.

HAPPY: Stuff it then, Hex.

(Storms out.)

O'NEILL: That may not have been wise. She's, er...

HEX: Mental?

O'NEILL: Hardly a medical diagnosis.

HEX: Yeah, sorry. I've not been sleeping too well. How long has she had the toy?

O'NEILL: Happy the rabbit? Well, it's new. Helpful, though. You see, many psychotherapists use...

HEX: Yeah. I know. They use it as a technique to get patients, especially young ones, to open up. They get the subject to speak through a disguise or a mask, or in this case a stuffed toy.

O'NEILL: Yes, right, well. I have some essays to mark. We can continue our chat tonight, after dinner.

DICKENS [OC]: Everybody. Everybody in here now!

HEX: (sighs) Now what?

O'NEILL: Good evening, Ace. My extremities need warming. May I join you?

ACE: Mmm, sure .

O'NEILL: Ah. Better already.

ACE: So, nine o'clock and all's well. Except Doctor O'Neill, that is, for being in the middle of nowhere with no means of transport or communication, frequent power cuts, strikes, a chronic raging storm outside. Oh, and a corpse in the cellar.

O'NEILL: Yeah, but apart from that everything's hunky-dory. Poor old Hartley. Heart attack, it seems. You know, I am mildly - just mildly, mind you - beginning to regret ever seeing that notice. Join serious-minded professors over Christmas for uninterrupted study. Uninterrupted!

ACE: Doesn't your wife mind?

O'NEILL: Er, that's not an issue for me.

ACE: What's happened to Mr Hartley's body?

O'NEILL: Oh, the Major took command of that manoeuvre. Damn typical of Hartley, couldn't even die without making a bally-hoo of things. He ended up sticking the body in a chest freezer.

ACE: Urgh.

O'NEILL: I doubt Captain Bird's Eye'd approve, but the mortuary men refuse to come out until they get their

twelve per cent. Still, at least the power's back on. Well, for now. Here comes the poor Bursar. Look at her.

BURSAR: Thirteen years, Doctor. Thirteen years. Every winter, every New Year, whatever distraction, whatever the danger, you'd find us all here. Hartley. Oh, Hartley. So eager to please was he, and a fine and wondrous craftsman. Hand him good wire and needle, and he'd hand you a finished work so happily mounted, it was a very frame from Nature's story. No hint of Man's botched tainted intervention. Hartley called the beast to come alive, come spend the last beat of life not rotting in some soily field, but in perpetual splendour. An artist. An arbiter. An effete. May the Lord look upon his deeds with good heart.

DOCTOR: A moving eulogy, Bursar.

BURSAR: Oh, forgive me.

DOCTOR: May I wheel you to the fire?

BURSAR: That would be a kindness. Ah, but wait. There. Must preserve the power of the stair-lift . Otherwise I'd be in my room down here all night. Or up there all day. Perish *that* thought.

(Three chimes from the clock. Someone whistling.)

HEX: Ace, wake up.

ACE: Oh. What time is it?

HEX: Three am.

ACE: What?

HEX: Look, you've got to come. Someone's using the stair-lift .

ACE: (yawns) Who is?

HEX: I don't know. The hood's done up too tightly.

ACE: Hood? What do you mean hood?

HEX: A hood. You know, a hood. Hood, on a coat, an anorak thing. Does it matter? Look, we haven't got time.

ACE: Have you told the Doctor?

HEX: Are you serious? He'd go nuts. Come on.

ACE: Okay, the stair chair's been used, 'cause it's at the bottom of the stairs. But there's no-one down there. (Whistling from somewhere downstairs.)

HEX: Listen. That's what woke me up. There was someone whistling it on the landing.

ACE: Hex, it's the wind.

HEX: Come on, I think it came from downstairs. In the kitchen. Anyway, I'm starving.

ACE: You're mad.

HEX: Okay then. Forget the whistling. Say I make us a bacon sarnie? Come on.

ACE: No. Nice try, but no. Look, if you're hungry, by all means go down. I'm not stopping you.

(Distant whistling.)

HEX: There it is again. Ace? Oh, what's the use. Come on, you stupid thing. Light. Ah! Bingo. Hello? Bursar? Are you down there?

HEX: Hello? Anyone 'ere? Look, I don't care if you're some kind of midnight muncher, 'cause that's what I'm here for too. Oh, let's see what's in the fridge, eh? There's got to be something to eat. But when he got there, the cupboard was... Ah! Let's try the chest freezer.

(Blowing out candle.)

HEX: Hey!

DOCTOR: (recording) Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly.

HEX: Doctor. Am I glad to hear your voice. Oh yeah, and thanks for blowing me candle out. I was only after a midnight snack. There's always something in these big freezers. Oh my God! My God. It's Hartley's body. I forgot the Major put it in 'ere. And ... Oh my God. Doctor ... look. Someone's come along and. gouged out his eyes. Thought I'd seen some bad stuff in work but that is really yucky .

(Door locked.)

HEX: Hey. The door's... the kitchen door's stuck. I'm trapped in 'ere. Doctor, where are ya? I can't see anything. Why don't you say something?

(Rewinding tape.)

DOCTOR: (recording) Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly.

HEX: You're not the Doctor. You're... you're that person with the hoodie. Look, you're freaking me out. Who are ya? Who the hell are ya?!

(Whistling.)

[Part Two]

HEX: The door's unstuck. But who the hell was that? What sick game are they playing?

O'NEILL: Can someone tell me why we're all here, dragged out of our beds at five in the morning, please? I am not a happy bunny.

BURSAR: Someone's been sitting in my stair-chair.

O'NEILL: And someone's been eating my porridge. Look, this is all beginning to wear a bit thin.

HEX: This is no joke. One of you knows what's going on.

BURSAR: Well, we're not sure about that.

HEX: And one of you scared me, witless.

ACE: And nobody scares Hex witless. Not if they value their...

O'NEILL: Look, all I'm saying is...

DICKENS: Silence, everyone, please. Now, I've woken you all because Mister Hex has made a serious allegation. He claims that he came down here some hours ago, and Mister Hartley's body had been disfigured. We now find the corpse has been removed. Well, there's no evidence to show that Hex himself did not perpetrate this monstrous act. And we now cannot rule out murder as the reason for Mister Harley's death.

O'NEILL: You didn't suggest that yesterday, Major. What startling revelations have changed your outlook?

DICKENS: Do me the honour, Doctor O'Neill, and let me finish. I earlier mooted the possibility of crime, and the Deacon will bear witness to this. But my suggestion fell on deaf ears!

O'NEILL: He who talks so much is surely sometimes right.

DICKENS: If you were in uniform, sir, I'd bloody well...

BURSAR: Oh, do be quiet, both of you. Now, I wonder if the Doctor has anything to say.

O'NEILL: Me? But you...

BURSAR: Not you. *That* Doctor. You've stayed very silent, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Silence can sometimes show the greatest scorn, Bursar. We need to join forces. Now, you wanted me to say something specific?

BURSAR: No. Simply asking your advice.

DICKENS: I believe they define advice as a suggestion given to someone else which you hope will work to your own benefit, and...

HEX: Oh, belt up, Major.

DICKENS: You young...!

DOCTOR: In some ways the Major is right. If I get out of here alive and breathing I'll consider it a huge benefit. I daresay we all will.

O'NEILL: Oh, hooray. Someone talking sense at last.

DOCTOR: And on those grounds alone is my advice given. The body of Mister Hartley is somewhere in this house. We need to find out where. One of us here took it perhaps as a macabre joke, perhaps for fear of being caught.

BURSAR: Mister Hex, you have medical experience. How tough would it be to extract a pair of eyes from a semi-frozen body?

HEX: Well, I suppose you could if...

DICKENS: You're attacking it from the wrong direction. Any amateur could do what the boy has said he saw. Sharp penknife and the basic know-how of preparing meat or fish. Finish the job in five minutes. No different to gutting a thawing trout. No, the question to ask is not who would have the training, it's who would have the ruddy guts!

ACE: Dead right.

DOCTOR: Major, I believe the Deacon is already searching the upper floor and Sue's scouring the garden. I want you and Doctor O'Neill to join the search of the upper floor, the attic and the roof. Hex and I will do the garden and move into the rest of the ground floor with Sue. The others stay here as a base. We haven't a moment to lose.

ACE: And me?

DOCTOR: You? I need you to stay here with the Bursar.

ACE: But Doctor...

DOCTOR: (sotto) Because you I trust. Don't argue. Stay where you are.

DICKENS: Well, come on, O'Neill, what are you waiting for? (receding) I said all along that all was not right with this case. I have an open mind, but, you know...

O'NEILL: Open or vacant. Same thing I suppose.

ACE: They're just like an old married couple.

BURSAR: The Doctor spoke well just then. Most of us are afraid of the Major.

ACE: You people seem to revolve round the Major a lot, considering you all hate his guts.

BURSAR: We none of us *hate* him, Ace. We all just go back a long way. When ivy becomes entwined, cut one branch down and the whole lot collapses.

ACE: You're beginning to sound like you're channelling the Bible.

BURSAR: As the Deacon once reminded me, at night even the atheist half-believes in God.

(Scraping noise.)

BURSAR: That came from the attic. Perhaps they've found something.

ACE: Tell me about the attic. What's up there?

BURSAR: How would you expect me to know? Do you see any wings?

ACE: Sorry. I didn't think. See you in a minute.

BURSAR: You're not going up there. But the Doctor said...

ACE: Well, he's not here to try to stop me, is he? No one freaks my little Hexie out and gets away with it.

BURSAR: Well, be careful, then. Climb the main staircase. There's a pull-down set of steps at the top of the landing. Shout if you need help. For all the use I'll be down here.

HEX: At least the wind's subsided.

DOCTOR: This looks like the door leading to the back of the kitchen. Ah yes. And down here, look, right beside it, a convenient hatchway to the cellar.

HEX: Okay, so they got out of the kitchen, into the cellar, and out here. Well, where the hell did they hide Hartley's corpse? I mean, it'd weigh a ton, eyes or no eyes. You'd need to be a trained fire-fighter or a hospital porter, or, or have a willing helper. You know, to move it more than a metre or so.

DOCTOR: And how are you?

HEX: What's that got to do with anything? Oh. All right. What I saw last night wasn't good, but I'm over it, okay? It's just that nightmare's still playing on my mind. I know it sounds pathetic, but it was like I was really there, watching it. People bickering over an operation.

DOCTOR: They can be terrible things, night thoughts. In your case it felt less of a dream and more of a mental distress call?

HEX: Sort of, yeah. The worst bit was, I can still see it now. They were operating on what looked like a doll. You know, the size of a child, a little tiny thing. When they pulled the mask away - oh Doctor, it were sickening - the doll had no eyes. And that's what made me freak out last night, when I saw Hartley's eyes had gone too. Oh - and whoever it was in the hoodie, they're going round with a dodgy tape recording of your voice, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Sue. What news?

SUE: I've spread the word like you said. They're all coming back to the main hall for an update in five minutes. Except Ace.

DOCTOR: What? Where is she, Sue?

SUE: Nowhere.

HEX: But we left her with the Bursar.

SUE: Oh, she's zonked out on her chair, the poor old thing.

DOCTOR: (sotto) This is in danger of becoming out of control.

ACE: Hmm. No one up here.

(The Bursar cries out.)

ACE: You okay down there, Bursar? Huh. Like you can hear me from up here. Oh hell, I'd better go and...oh Doctor, you're gonna love this. (sniffs) Oh, nice. Oh, it smells just like a morgue. Or a chemistry lab. Yeah. Bunsen burners, animal parts. Oh, whoever's doing this is gonna wish they'd never been hatched. Oh, hello. (Heavy breathing.)

ACE: Okay, I can hear you, but I can't see you, so cheers for turning the lights out. I like people who don't play fair. Course, that gives you all the advantage. Especially now I've told you that. Good move, Ace. None out of ten for that one. Who are you? It's you again, isn't it? The one who freaked Hex out last night. Well, say something, then.

(Struggle.)

ACE: Gotcha! You may be taller than me, but you're not stronger. Ah! You pricked me. What's that? Blasted hypodermic. Ow! That really, really hurt, you, you utter...

(Thud.)

HEX: Ace? Ace? Bursar, wake up. Oh, fudge. Doctor? Sue? I hate to say this, but the Bursar's not just asleep. She's comatose.

DOCTOR: There's a syringe down here.

SUE: Could be suicide.

HEX: You're all charm and lovely thoughts, aren't ya?

DEACON [OC]: Quickly. Anyone. Come quickly. Something's going on in the attic.

DEACON: Look. It's your friend. She's unconscious.

HEX: Still breathing. And another syringe. It's not administered by an expert. Just stabbed into the wrist. Pulse good. Temperature okay-ish. Pupils, yep.

DOCTOR: Ace, can you hear us?

HEX: Just raise a hand.

DOCTOR: Well done, Ace. A relief for us all. Now, let's hope it's the same for the Bursar. Deacon, would you

hold the fort up here whilst we take Ace to her room? I think this attic may hold many answers.

O'NEILL: There you are. Give me a hand. (groans) A body weighs enough anyway, but a semi-frozen one. The Doctor's theory was right. He said it would be down here in the cellar. Someone pulled it out of the chest freezer, through the kitchen back door, into the garden, and chucked it straight through the hatchway into here. Well, most people could manage that. Even you.

DICKENS: Even me, O'Neill. Even me. And his eyes. Gouged out, just as Hex had said. Time, I think, to assume control. I give the orders here, is that clear?

O'NEILL: Oh, translucent, Major. So what do *you* think removed his eyes?

DICKENS: I don't think, I know.

O'NEILL: Ha. I don't think you know at all. Now, if you'll excuse me, once we've moved this body back to where it came from, I have several hours work to prepare.

DICKENS: Work, and poetry, or whatever it is you do. It's rather a contradiction in terms, I'd say.

O'NEILL: Like military intelligence. One thing's for sure. Strike or no strike, I'm setting out for civilisation tomorrow and informing the police.

ACE: But I don't need any rest.

DOCTOR: Ace, you've had a nasty shock to the system. I insist you stay here until the drugs wear off.

HEX: We don't even know what was injected into you, although I have a suspicion. But the Bursar's in her room too. She took a much larger dose.

DOCTOR: And I don't want you left alone, Ace. I'll ask Sue to keep you company.

HEX: Oh, great. Creepy stuffed toy girl.

DOCTOR: I beg your pardon?

ACE: Stuffed toy girl?

HEX: You'll love it, Ace. Ask to meet Happy the Rabbit. Right up your street. Not.

DEACON: (singing) A man who looks on glass, on it may rest his eye. What has been going on up here? Under my very nose. Sulphuric acid? Some sort of animal foot? Phew, and the smell. (singing) Or if he pleaseth, through it pass, and then the heav'n espy. Hang on. A fridge? Oh, a locked fridge. Call reinforcements? No. I'll get to the bottom of this. Must be a hacksaw up here in this little lot somewhere. Ah! Hello there.

(Sawing, effort, clunk.)

DEACON: Ah! Progress. My girls in the rambling society would be proud of me. So, open sesame. Let's see what horrors lie within this annoying little fridge. More animal parts. What have my colleagues been doing. Oh. No. No. No, no, no! (screams) Ah, they did do it! Ah! They swore they hadn't, but they did! No, don't come up. I, I need some time to, to think. I said...

(Door slams shut.)

DEACON: Oh! No!

DOCTOR: (recording) Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly.

DEACON: I don't know who you are, but I now know *why* you are. Please accept my word as a woman of God that I knew nothing, nothing about the lengths they had gone to until just now. I concede I did wrong, and probably deserve to be punished, but, please, please, stay back. Please!

(Clatter of glass.)

DICKENS: Behind the curve again, O'Neill. Behind the curve. No need for you to fetch the police, I've already sent for them and they're on their way.

O'NEILL: That's good, but how? When?

DICKENS: Ham radio. Used the transmitter, and an aerial in the outhouse.

O'NEILL: Didn't know we had such things.

DICKENS: Well, we do, and I've used them. Put a message to an Army chum of mine who as we speak, is radioing the authorities. We should expect a boat by sunrise.

O'NEILL: For once, Major Dickens, may I reluctantly say, well done.

(Distant scream.)

DICKENS: Sounds like... No. No, that's the Deacon.

(Knocking on door.)

ACE: Who is it? What's that yelling, and...

(Door opens.)

ACE: Oh. Sue.

(Door closes.)

ACE: And your rabbit. Happy, isn't it? He? Well, hello, Happy. Hello, Sue. Why don't you, you both come and sit on the bed.

HAPPY: What do you want? Why don't you go away?

ACE: We haven't got much choice in this weather, but...

HAPPY: I don't care.

ACE: Sue? Is that really you speaking? Why don't you just talk normally? That's right. Put Happy down.

SUE: It's all right. I'm perfectly normal.

HEX: There's nothing we can do for her.

O'NEILL: Here, let me take...

DICKENS: I wouldn't look too closely if I were you, O'Neill.

DOCTOR: Sulphuric acid, swallowed neat.

DICKENS: That's what it points to.

HEX: I saw a girl do that once before, on night shift. Thought that was one too many.

DICKENS: It sliced right through her throat. Poor woman.

DOCTOR: Much the same for her inner organs too. A thorough job.

O'NEILL: That's a bit ghoulish, Doctor.

DICKENS: And what's been done here isn't?

ACE: All right, Sue. What's with the rabbit?

SUE: Just a friend. Beats being alone.

ACE: Yeah, I can understand that. I had an imaginary friend when I was a kid.

SUE: Not the same. I don't like your friend Hex.

ACE: Oh, why not? He's really nice, you know.

SUE: Wouldn't tell me the story, the one about the rabbit, said he knew one. He's a liar.

ACE: If you give me your t... If you let Happy have a little lie-down, I'll tell you a story about a rabbit, yeah? Deal?

SUE: Deal.

ACE: Well, it went like this. My aunt's neighbours went away for a week on holiday, and Auntie was asked to keep an eye on the house, right? Anyway, a few days go by and all's well when Auntie's dog brings an unexpected present home which, er, unfortunately, is her neighbour's pet rabbit. It's obvious the dog's killed the poor thing in a fight, 'cause both animals are covered in mud.

SUE: Mmm hmm.

ACE: Anyway, the rabbit's still in one piece, so Auntie decides to wash the thing, give it a quick blow-dry and stick it back into its hutch, make it look like it died in its sleep. Well, the neighbour comes back from hols, and sure enough she comes round in floods of tears. What's the matter? asks Auntie, all innocent, you know, and so the neighbour tells her...

SUE: The poor family pet had died and gone to Heaven?

ACE: No. It turns out, the rabbit had died the day before they'd left for Corfu. They buried it in the garden, and the dog must have dug it up. To this day, Auntie's neighbours still believe that the rabbit crawled out of its grave, had a quick wash in the pond, climbed back into the hutch, and locked the door behind it!

SUE: Heard that one before. Not very funny.

ACE: Oh. Okay. How about you, then? Do you have any aunts? Where's your family? No. Leave Happy on the bed, Sue. You don't need to...

HAPPY: Mother dead. Father gone. We think your sister's drowned. Adopted. Escaped from adoption home. Came to work at Sibley Hall.

ACE: Why here, Sue? Why in the middle of nowhere? There must be a reason.

HAPPY: Mother dead. Father gone. We think your sister's drowned. Adopted. Escaped from adoption...

ACE: What's happened to you?

HAPPY: They killed her! They killed my baby! Thought she was dead. Tried to mask it out. Which one did it? Which one? I'll hunt them. I'll slice the truth out of them one by one, gouge it out like my baby's eyes. And then, and then...

SUE: And then...

(Runs out crying.)

DOCTOR: (reading) I hereby certify that I am taking my own life. No one else is involved, and no one else should be punished. Ten years ago I made a terrible error of judgement, and God alone will be my judge. My one wish is that I am not mourned. No funeral, no flowers, no fuss. You will all know what this means.

DICKENS: I suppose we do. It's her handwriting, I'd vouch for that, and her style. No funeral, no flowers, no fuss. In many ways that sums her up. But there's one wish I cannot follow. I for one will mourn her loss, and deeply so.

O'NEILL: Has anybody thought to tell the Bursar?

HEX: Well, if you want me to, I'll do it when she wakes up. It's sometimes easier coming from a stranger.

DICKENS: Thank you, Hex. But I think in her state we should wait until the police arrive.

(Running past, crying.)

HEX: That was Sue.

DOCTOR: I thought she was supposed to be looking after Ace.

(Knock on door.)

ACE: Come in.

(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: It's me, Ace.

(Door closes.)

DOCTOR: Sue's in tears. What happened?

ACE: That toy rabbit, Happy, it...

DOCTOR: Scares you? You?

ACE: Yeah. Well, look at it. It seems almost...

DOCTOR: Yes?

ACE: Sad, like it has a secret.

DOCTOR: Yes. Yes, perhaps the girl holds the key. I must speak to her. And her rabbit.

ACE: You can be weird sometimes, you know that?

DOCTOR: Weird? Me? Huh. Perish the thought.

ACE: There's something else, isn't there? What was that yelling earlier?

DOCTOR: The Deacon's dead.

ACE: Murdered?

DOCTOR: No, suicide, apparently. She left a note. Perhaps she finally confronted her demons. The same ones, perhaps, who drugged you and the Bursar. Think on that. Why only drug you two, but go that one step further with the Deacon?

DICKENS: Of course, Hex, the Taj Express runs daily from Delhi. I travelled first class, the only way in India, and spent the day roaming round the dear old town. Smelly and full of tourists, though. Full of damned Indians too. But enough of my army days, Hex. Have you ever been to any alien climes?

HEX: Major, one day in Agra isn't enough. You want to travel third class too, open your eyes.

DICKENS: I'm sorry, boy, but I beg to differ. Where else have you been?

O'NEILL: You haven't been to these parts before, Hex.

DICKENS: Yes. We've never had a satisfactory explanation of why you came to the island.

HEX: Island?

(Knock on door.)

ACE: Yeah?

(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Hello, Sue. What can we do for you?

SUE: I've come to say sorry for flipping, and to get my rabbit back.

DOCTOR: Sue, Ace, can I leave you two together while I check up on the Bursar?

ACE: Sure. Sue, sit down.

(Door closes.)

SUE: I bring the answer to your question. You asked about my family, and I bring the answer.

ACE: Bring? You mean have. You have the answer.

SUE: No, it's here. Here on this tape. The most valuable thing I possess, more precious than Happy. Sorry, Happy.

BURSAR: It's kind of you to look in, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I wanted to check how you were feeling. Have you been able to get much sleep?

BURSAR: A little.

DOCTOR: I'm admiring your collection of books. Einstein. Malakov. Serosky. Ah. Bartholomew. JJ Bartholomew.

BURSAR: Some of them unread, I'm afraid. One day, perhaps.

DOCTOR: What puzzles me, Bursar, is that these are high-brow science books. State of the art, as it were.

BURSAR: Yes, but as I say...

DOCTOR: But when we arrived, the Deacon said you were simply here to jolly things along. Hartley the skilled taxidermist, Major Dickens lectures in medical science, O'Neill a writer and dreamer, like-minded scientists grouped together to... now, what were the Deacon's words? to run a few experiments.

BURSAR: I'm not sure what you're driving at.

DOCTOR: You say some books on the shelf are unread. Some of the books are very well-read, aren't they, Bursar? Thumbed within an inch of their lives, Bursar. You've been holding something back from me, Bursar. You're not quite the character you seem. Come on, Bursar, tell me who you are.

HEX: Well, it's very much as we said. We were lost, and we came looking for help, and we found you.

DICKENS: I'm afraid that little story will no longer suffice. Until we have a full explanation, I think it's time for

a little less hospitality and a little more straight-talking. Don't you agree, O'Neill?

O'NEILL: Until the police arrive, I guess so.

DICKENS: Police? Afraid it'll be a while before they get here. In the meantime, I have decided to take a more interventionist approach.

ACE: What was that?

SUE: It's Major Dickens. He's switched on the security locks. We're shut in.

ACE: Try the window.

SUE: There's a fire escape below. Oh no, the window's locked too.

ACE: Blast.

SUE: Don't worry, Happy and I have broken in and out of more foster homes than you've had hot dinners, cold dinners and goodness knows what else dinners. Stand back.

ACE: Hey, nice one. Dickens'll go bananas.

SUE: Quick, he'll be up to fix it. Out of the window.

ACE: Where are we going?

SUE: The chapel. Come on, just grab your gown and hurry.

HEX: What the hell's going on 'ere?

DICKENS: You do at least admire the handiwork of my alarm system, Hex.

O'NEILL: But not its uses. Dickens, this time you're way over the mark.

DICKENS: The monitor shows a circuit break in Bedroom Three.

DICKENS: An open window. How stupid. How tragically yet humorously stupid!

HEX: If Ace and Sue have escaped, your game is over. They're resourceful. They'll be back with help. Admit it, Major. You've lost. Doctor O'Neill, where do you think they're heading?

O'NEILL: The chapel. There's a disused chapel half a mile from here. Sue goes there a lot.

DICKENS: You haven't mentioned the bear trap, O'Neill. Tell Hex about the bear trap.

HEX: Eh?

O'NEILL: Hartley set a dozen or so large animal traps to kill wildlife for his taxidermy. Don't worry, they can only be activated from the house. Oh no. Surely not. You haven't?

DICKENS: May I make a suggestion, Hex? If I unlock the front door, why don't you see if you can find the girls before the trap snaps shut. You have five seconds . Five, four, three...

SUE: Keep running. We're nearly there.

ACE: Oh, it's so dark. If I trip on this blasted dressing-gown cord again I'll...

SUE: Here we are. The chapel.

ACE: Spooky.

SUE: Look, candles and matches. I'll start a fire.

HEX [OC]: Ace? Sue?

ACE: Oh, it's Hex. This way, Hex! I'll see you back here in a minute, Sue.

HEX: Ace? Watch out for the...

ACE: I'm coming! Don't worry! I'm coming! Oh, it's so dark. Hello? Where are you, Hex? Hex?

HEX: Sue. Thank God. Look, you're in great danger. It's the bear traps. The Major has switched on the bear traps. Now, where's Ace?

SUE: I don't know. She went to find you. Ace?

HEX: Ace?

ACE [OC]: Hex! Where the hell are you? I'm ... Yeah, all right, I'm lost. And I can't see a thing. Keep calling and I'll run towards you.

HEX: No. Don't run. For God's sake, don't run.

ACE: That's it. Keep calling.

(Clang! Scream!)

SUE: Ace? Ace!

HEX: Ace!

[Part Three]

HEX: Ace. Look, we'll never find her without a light.

SUE: There are torches back at the house.

HEX: Worth the risk. Stay here and keep those candles lit, okay? At least I'll be able to get my bearings coming back.

DOCTOR: What are you lying there for? Are you all right?

ACE: I don't know. I just feel numb. I was running along, there was an almighty snap and I felt myself being

yanked head first to the ground. I think I may have blanked out.

DOCTOR: It's a good thing you did. Now don't move.

ACE: Why? What can you see? Oh, I haven't broken something, have I? Oh, that's why I can't feel anything, I've broken my spine!

DOCTOR: Do you want the good news or the bad?

ACE: Oh, good, please.

DOCTOR: The bear trap snapped on your dressing-gown cord. You're numb because you've been lying in the freezing rain.

ACE: Oh, thank God. Well, can I move now? Well, come on then. You could at least lend me your jacket.

DOCTOR: Stay still. This brings me to the bad news.

ACE: Oh? What?

DOCTOR: Your right leg's fallen neatly in the middle of another bear trap. The tiniest movement will set it off.

ACE: If it snaps shut, I'll be crippled?

DOCTOR: Assuming we have time to stop you bleeding to death, most probably.

ACE: You take me to the nicest places.

(Ten o'clock.)

HEX: For God's sake, Major, will you just please unset the traps before anyone else gets hurt. Look, for all we know Ace is dead. At least let me go out there and collect the body.

DICKENS: Hex, I am so terribly sorry. I had no idea the traps had been set.

O'NEILL: But you were the one who told him.

DICKENS: I concede I wanted to scare you, to bring you all down a peg, but to endanger human life, that's something I'd never do. Despite my theatrics, the traps can't be set automatically. I'd have to have gone outside and done it manually.

HEX: You just wanted to frighten me? Well, you succeeded, Major Dickens. Succeeded very well.

O'NEILL: So who set the traps, then?

DICKENS: Well, it could have been... Oh no, that can't be right, because the three of us were here, the Doctor was with the Bursar, and your friend Ace was with Sue. And I doubt the police would have done it.

HEX: Too busy coming to get you, with any luck.

DICKENS: Sadly, yes. A tragic end to years of work.

O'NEILL: At least turn off the remaining window and door locks, Major. I think we're all impressed by your security measures, but now might not be the time to be showing off, yeah?

DOCTOR: Sue, is that you? Oh, good. I need two large pieces of slate from the chapel. Ace is lying over there with her leg in an animal trap. If together we smash either end of the trap with the slate, it should be enough to shatter the hinge.

SUE: And if it isn't enough?

DOCTOR: Let's not think about that.

SUE: How about this?

DOCTOR: What is it exactly?

SUE: Dunno. Seems to be some kind of stone. Oh, it weighs a bit.

DOCTOR: Hmm.

ACE [OC]: Are you coming? I'm freezing out here.

DOCTOR: Yes, fine. Help me pull it up and I'll crack it in two.

SUE: A good whack should do it. There.

ACE [OC]: Hurry up! I'm getting cramp!

SUE: We're coming.

DICKENS: You do know the history of Gravonax Isle, I presume?

HEX: Not a thing.

DICKENS: Of the one hundred islands of the Outer Hebrides, this one holds a macabre exclusivity in the eyes of our neighbours. Guide books devote chapters to its history, wrongly describing it as uninhabited and uninhabitable.

HEX: But you have water, phone lines, electricity. Yeah, it doesn't always work I gather, but it's there.

DICKENS: Gravonax Isle was used in the war for toxin experiments. The dozen or so inhabitants were relocated and the army moved in, smothering the place with Gravonax gas. Not what you'd class a military success. Everything on the island withered and died. Trees, fish, wild animals, the lot. Animals suffered a long and lingering death. Eventually, it makes your eyes pop out, literally.

HEX: But you're living here.

DICKENS: It was decontaminated after the war. But no one wanted to return. Hardly surprising. That's why we chose it for our work. Though now, I wish I'd never set foot here.

HEX: What's taking O'Neill so damn long?

DICKENS: Oh, don't fret so. He'll be there with the torches before very long. He knows the island well, and

don't forget, he'll have to avoid the traps himself.

HEX: Yeah well, I still think you should have gone. They're your traps.

DICKENS: Ah, but I'm not as young as I once was. He'll be a lot faster.

HEX: Damn you, I'm going after him.

HEX: Doctor.

O'NEILL: Ace. Sue. You're all right.

ACE: Yeah, no thanks to you lot.

DOCTOR: Hello, Hex. Doctor O'Neill, thank you for your concern. Now, come inside. We've lit a small fire in an oil can in what I suppose was the vestry.

HEX: It's nice to be a bit warmer.

SUE: Ace got caught in a bear trap and we rescued her, the Doctor and me.

O'NEILL: I know, I came out to find you. This is a creepy old place, once used by the monks, I think, before the war.

DOCTOR: Sue is about to play us a tape recording. Sue, would you be offended if Doctor O'Neill listened in too?

SUE: Suppose not.

ACE: Go on, Sue. Play it. Play the tape.

MAUDE: (recording) January the Twelfth. This is the diary of... No, I'll start again. Let me get it correct. This is a statement by... Oh, I'm no good at this. My name's Maude, and these are my feelings. They told me to talk through my feelings, put them down on tape. They said it would help with the pain. They've been so nice to me I can hardly say no. I've got no pain, just empty. I mean, how do you feel when, when you're told something so terrible, as a mother. How are you supposed to feel? My baby, my little girl, dead. Ice cold on a slab. Pale as icing. What am I supposed to be feeling? Just seventeen she was. Seventeen. Call that a life? They said she was dying. Eadie, my girl. They said she was dying, but she wasn't. She wasn't dying. So now she's dead. She's dead because she wasn't dying. And the only place I'll ever feel warm, the only place I belong, is in the lake. Drowning, drowning, sweet drowning. At peace at last, in the lake. I gave her my goodbyes, my sweet little Eadie. God, she was in a mess. Blood everywhere. Poor little mite, blood all over the slab. I even sang her her favourite tune. Sang it for the last time ever. (Singing) Oranges and Lemons, said the bells of Saint Clement's.

DOCTOR: Sue, am I right in thinking you believe the voice is that of your late mother?

SUE: Yes. It was the only thing I was given when I was fostered, although my foster parents only gave it to me on my fourteenth birthday. They thought I was old enough. Happy didn't agree, but we used to listen to the tape together.

DOCTOR: Happy?

HEX: That toy rabbit thing.

DOCTOR: Ah.

ACE: And your father's dead too?

SUE: I didn't know my father. But dead, yes. Me, I get passed around foster homes quicker than a box of sweets.

O'NEILL: Doctor, I have a suggestion, that we all return to the house. The Major clearly sees he's overstepped the mark, he just... I, I think we have just become a little over-emotional. The events, the deaths, and now this? It's all a bit too much.

DOCTOR: I agree. Ace, you and I will head back to the house. Hex, you take Sue and the good doctor here and have a scout around this chapel.

SUE: Mister Hartley's workshop is attached to the back. He liked being alone out here.

DOCTOR: Did he now? I wonder why. Okay, Sue, take these two there. Er, come on, Ace. I think it's time we forced everybody to show their hand. Starting with the Bursar.

DICKENS: Oh, there we are. Teas all round. It's been, well, not a good night, all told.

DOCTOR: Now, Bursar. I believe you have something to say to us all.

BURSAR: I must congratulate you, Doctor. You are indeed spot on. I am JJ Bartholomew.

DOCTOR: The celebrated scientific theorist.

DICKENS: In not revealing her identity, the Bursar's motives were altruistic. If word spread she were here, our experiments would be tampered with. To let the scientific world continue to believe she is dead is in all our interests.

DOCTOR: Hence the reference books in your room. All well-read except for the ones by Bartholomew. (Eleven o'clock.)

ACE: She didn't need to read them, 'cause she'd written them! Oh, right.

DOCTOR: What none of you will know is that JJ Bartholomew's experiments on the transmission of subatomic particles will in future centuries be seen as an early step in the development of a workable theory of time travel.

ACE: So that's how *you* know about her, then.

BURSAR: I blush, Doctor, but your prescience is remarkable. My paper outlining the theory has yet to be published. Perhaps you saw it in my room. Let me demonstrate what I, and my helpers here, have discovered. This is the fruit of our work. The Bartholomew Transactor can take a microscopically small piece of matter, a sub-atomic particle, and transmit that particle back to an earlier point in time where the particle can be captured by an identical machine.

DOCTOR: A fascinating piece of work. The only limitation being, you need a Transactor to receive the particle as well as needing one to send it.

DICKENS: It had its first part successful firing just this week, which is why we were all so nervous when you arrived.

DOCTOR: You say it was a part success?

BURSAR: A dreadful misfortune. Halfway through, the power supply packed in.

DICKENS: Now, do you see why we're so secretive, so protective of our work?

ACE: Can we see it working?

BURSAR: Certainly. But there's more. Remember, sub-atomic particles are miniscule. We have modified the surface of one such particle so it can be read like a record. It can recreate a series of simple noises. Major, please switch on the Transactor's amplifier.

ACE [OC]: Marmaduke! Beech!

ACE: My voice. It came from inside the machine. But I haven't said...

BURSAR: Now, Ace, without pausing for thought, I want you to remember the name of your first childhood pet.

ACE: I can see where this is going.

BURSAR: Now, think of the name of the first road on which you ever lived, move swiftly to the machine, and shout both names into the top cone.

ACE: Marmaduke! Beech!

DICKENS: Oh, well done.

DOCTOR: Congratulations, Bursar.

DICKENS: The particle is ready, Bursar. The young lady's words are embedded.

BURSAR: To use the Major's favourite analogy then, fire at will.

(Whoosh!)

BURSAR: There. The demonstration is complete.

DICKENS: Remarkable achievement!

DOCTOR: Thank you for sharing it with us. But I suspect the Bartholomew Transactor is not the only secret you've been hiding. I think it's time now you revealed your other reason for staying on this island.

O'NEILL: This is it. Hartley's taxidermy workshop. Hex, the torches belong back down there.

HEX: So this is where he stuffed the animals, is it? Yuck. Look at this. Thought eagles were endangered or something. Hey, how much stuffing do you think he needed for that bear in the main hall?

O'NEILL: Can't say that it ever crossed my mind, but it's what, seven foot tall, weighing about twenty stone?

Well, let's see. Taking in the embalming fluids...

HEX: Yeah, whatever. Never mind.

SUE: I used to come here and watch him work. He was a genius.

HEX: Wolves, deer, rabbits. Various other things.

SUE: Yeah. They look so life-like.

O'NEILL: The Madame Tussaud's of the animal kingdom. I gather in his youth he had quite a reputation for preserving pets. You'd be amazed how much people will pay.

HEX: Sue, did Mister Hartley ever say how he stuffed them? I mean, what material he used? It's just that, look. Here you are, touch this fox. Its tongue's still intact. And I can feel its liver through the rib cage. He must have used some kind of chemical preservative.

SUE: If it helps, the chemicals he used are in the house. He used to mix them in the attic.

O'NEILL: Everything's preserved. This deer head. Its own eyes are still in place. But not the slightest indication of decay. A modern form of mummification. How ingenious.

BURSAR: It's hard knowing where to begin, Doctor. I'll tell it as best as I can. Oh, and Major? Feel free to chip in if you find reason to differ.

DICKENS: Huh.

DOCTOR: So, Bursar, the floor is yours.

BURSAR: Well, ten years ago, four noted academics assembled in this room to demonstrate to one another their scientific findings. Me, Major Dickens, Hartley and the Deacon. The event was interrupted by the arrival of a woman called Maude something or other, and she and her two daughters...

ACE: *Two* daughters?

BURSAR: Yes. They were seeking shelter from a storm. It was a dreadful storm. Oh, as bad as the night you arrived. Of course, we welcomed them, but one daughter, Eadie, became blind. One of us - and you'll forgive me if I refrain from saying who - diagnosed the girl as having Gravonax poisoning. The island is infamous for

the poison gasses tested here during the war, Gravenox being the most deadly.

DICKENS: The first indication is blindness. Gravenox poison has no cure.

BURSAR: To avoid slow and painful suffocation, Eadie's death was hurried along. Compassionate euthanasia.

DICKENS: A dreadful thing, but the only option. To speed Eadie's death was an act of humane kindness.

ACE: Compassionate euthanasia. Yeah, don't remember that one making Newsnight.

BURSAR: Oh, that brings me to the hard bit. We agreed, foolishly, that rather than risk scandal, we would bury Eadie's body in secret.

DOCTOR: But Maude something or other - nice of you to remember the important facts, Bursar - Eadie's mother, committed suicide. We've heard a tape she made.

DICKENS: Tape?

BURSAR: The mother was later found dead in the lake, yes. Which is where she rests in peace to this day.

DICKENS: With deep regret we threw Maude's possessions into the sea. She didn't carry any ID, you see, just a few things monogrammed with her initials M.O. Because we didn't know her last name, Doctor, we couldn't let anyone know.

BURSAR: Although it wasn't in our interests to do so anyway. Then they were washed up some months later, and in time we got word that an inquest returned an open verdict, awaiting the seven-year rule, and that would only apply if someone came forward to report a Maude someone missing.

ACE: And the other daughter? Did you carry out compassionate euthanasia on her too?

DICKENS: Ruth. The other daughter's name was Ruth. We have always worked on the assumption that Ruth perished in the lake alongside her mother. She was a very young child. But regrettably her body remains unrecovered.

HEX: Sue, it's not the best place to say this - you know, all the stuffed animals and all - but I just want to tell you how brave you are. I mean, can't be easy hearing a voice like that on tape. The voice of your dead mum? Especially the things she said.

SUE: It's okay. I'm cool about it. That's why I'm here. Them in the house don't know about the tape. They don't know what I know. But feelings? Nah. Like I say, I'm cool.

HEX: What about your dad? You say you're in care, a foster home. What happened to your dad?

HAPPY: Father left her. Went abroad, we think. Probably dead. We don't care. Mother dead. Father gone. We think your sister's drowned. Adopted. Escaped from adoption home. Came to work at Sibley Hall.

HEX: Sue, Sue. Come on. Look, put the toy down. That's right. You and I have something in common. I never knew my mum either. I was lucky, though. Gran brought me up. Though, I thought until I was six she was me Mam. I know what it's like, Sue. I'm on your wavelength.

SUE: I just don't know what it's like to be, to be hugged. Really hugged.

HEX: Aw. Come here then, sweetheart. You're going to get the biggest bear hug of your life.

(Door opens.)

O'NEILL: Hex, Sue, look at this. Oh. I, I'm sorry to intrude.

HEX: You want to join us in a group hug, Doctor O'Neill?

O'NEILL: I can honestly say there is nothing I would like more, but this can't wait. These stones that you used to break Ace's trap. Where did you find them?

SUE: It was one stone. Poking from the ground by the chapel. We smashed it in two.

O'NEILL: And that's all you know?

SUE: Yeah. Why?

O'NEILL: I'm afraid I have a shock for you. It's easier if I put them on the table.

SUE: Writing?

HEX: Oh no. E O, RIP. It's a gravestone.

O'NEILL: Eadie. The woman on Sue's tape said her daughter was Eadie.

HEX: That's a bit of a leap of logic, Doctor.

SUE: My sister. It must be the grave of my sister Eadie.

HEX: Sue, did your mother's name begin with O?

SUE: I don't remember, I was only six. My fosters gave me a new name, Susan McVeigh. I, I don't remember my mother's surname.

HEX: O. Oswald? O'Malley? Er, O'Dell?

O'NEILL: O'Neill. The O is for O'Neill. I couldn't. I didn't know. It was only when I heard the tape, I don't know what to... Sue, Maude O'Neill was... she was my wife. Eadie was my daughter. I thought. I'm so sorry. I thought all three of you were dead. That's why I came here, to find out once and for all why Maude died. Sue, your real name is Ruth. Ruth O'Neill. I am your father.

ACE: But why didn't you all just come clean? Anyone would understand that what you did to Eadie was a mercy killing. She had Gravenox poisoning. She was going to die anyway.

BURSAR: There lies the rub. She did not have poisoning. She had an eye infection. A simple eye infection. Eadie could have lived. Her mother found this out.

DICKENS: Bursar, that's enough.

ACE: You killed her daughter? Eadie had an eye infection, and you killed her?

BURSAR: It was an understandable diagnostic oversight. Our sole motivation for staying together on the island was to undo the wrong we did by misdiagnosing and killing the girl. Through uninterrupted study, our aim was to make a discovery that could save lives. But now we have an even better plan.

DOCTOR: Ah. You intend to use the Bartholomew machine to send a message ten years back in time, instructing your earlier selves to abandon your attempts at euthanasia.

BURSAR: Precisely. There was a prototype machine in the room at the time of the operation. It can act as the receiver.

DOCTOR: It will never work.

DICKENS: You're wrong, Doctor. We nearly succeeded on the night you arrived. This time it will work. There will be no interruptions to the power supply.

DOCTOR: One thing puzzles me. You said all along that you're here for the university winter break, and that the four of you assemble every year. But Major Dickens made it sound as though you were actually permanently in residence.

BURSAR: Of course we are.

DICKENS: Watch it, Bursar.

BURSAR: No. This has gone on long enough. I'm not here of my own free will, Doctor. For ten years I've been a prisoner, ever since the night of Eadie's death.

ACE: Oh my God.

BURSAR: A desire to alter the fact of the death has become an obsession. It was a tragic event, but we should just move on.

ACE: Why didn't you call for help? Or what about Doctor O'Neill? When he arrived, why didn't you tell your secret to him?

BURSAR: I tried that once. I tried to escape, and I was punished. Look at the result.

ACE: Your legs. Not the bear trap?

BURSAR: The bear trap.

DICKENS: But Bursar, see reason. Once our experiment is completed, none of this will ever have happened. History will be reinvented. We'll all be leading happier lives. Besides, we had an agreement. In return for your freedom, you would run the experiment.

BURSAR: And now I refuse categorically.

DICKENS: In which case I have no choice but to force you. The Doctor and Miss McShane will be locked in the cellar, bear traps attached to their limbs. Any hint of disobedience, and I'll trigger the traps. What do you say to that?

BURSAR: I still refuse. I'm sorry, but my mind's made up. I'm not using this invention for dangerous and ethically dubious purposes.

DOCTOR: No need for threats, Major. I've read the Bursar's thesis. I can operate the machine. I will help you, if that's truly what you want.

DOCTOR: All right, Major, the Bartholomew Transactor is now operational. What message do you wish me to transmit back through time?

DICKENS: The message has already been recorded. It's a simple verbal warning that the euthanasia operation on Eadie should cease. The operation took place under general anaesthetic here in the attic laboratory. Fortunately the prototype Bartholomew device was present in the room at the time.

DOCTOR: So it will be there to act as a receiver.

DICKENS: Precisely, Doctor.

DOCTOR: So, I place the pre-recorded particle into the firing device like so, and er. Do you want me to fire it now, or shall we wait until you've had time to strap bear traps to the legs of two defenceless women?

DICKENS: Defenceless? Your friend Ace? Nice try, Doctor. Now, do let's behave like grown-ups. Keep the emotion out of it. Fire at will.

DOCTOR: Firing now. There. Mission accomplished. The message has been transmitted through time.

DICKENS: But we're still here. Nothing's changed. Eadie should be alive.

DOCTOR: Of course nothing's changed, you arrogant fool.

DICKENS: You tampered with the machine?

DOCTOR: Major Dickens, the process of firing particles backwards through time has only a temporary and minimal effect on the current day, hence the popularity of the Bartholomew Transactor in later centuries.

DICKENS: But it must have some effect on our world.

DOCTOR: Only a little. JJ Bartholomew's device will be used by future generations as a plaything, a party tool. The results of the process are tame. Users experience at worst a ghostly and short-lived taste of what might have been, akin to a double-exposed photograph.

DICKENS: So history is not overwritten? Not changed for good?

DOCTOR: No. It's not a powerful enough process to have any lasting effect. If the audio message I have sent persuades your earlier selves to change their minds then technically, the past will have been altered and

Eadie will once again live. But the most that will happen in the present day is that Eadie's skeletal remains will twitch a little in her grave as the forces of Time try to puzzle out whether she is living or dead. With no muscle or fibre, the body will be unable to return to life. And even if some muscle still existed, the body is still, what, six foot underground somewhere out there.

DICKENS: I see. May I ask, Doctor, theoretically of course, whether the body could come back to life if it had been, say, embalmed?

DOCTOR: Technically, yes. Had the body been perfectly preserved, it might return to life temporarily. Not something I would ever recommend trying.

O'NEILL: It'll take me a while to stop calling you Sue.

SUE: (laughs) I don't care. You can call me anything, Dad. Here it is. Here's where I found the gravestone.

O'NEILL: I simply had no idea. Not until I heard the tape of your mum.

SUE: There. I've put Eadie's stone back where it belongs. I suppose she is definitely buried here?

DOCTOR: I've been a little slow, haven't I, Major? I kept asking myself why Hartley was so crucial to your plans. You held him here prisoner too, I suppose. Hartley, the great preserver of life, embalmed Eadie's body before burial.

DICKENS: You got there in the end.

DOCTOR: So, if the audio message persuades the medics to halt the operation, Eadie's corpse may now be returning to life, albeit temporarily, in her coffin, and Sue and O'Neill are at the graveside.

DICKENS: How entertaining. I don't think the coffin was very deep down. There's every chance they might hear Eadie cry out. How delightfully grotesque. And that means the Bursar, Ace and Hex are surplus to requirements. Shall we go and play with the bear traps, Doctor? Maybe that will convince you to find a way to improve the Bursar's machine.

(Digging.)

O'NEILL: Are you sure you want to do this? It's a pretty gruesome task.

SUE: I'm not squeamish. Happy reckons we need to look at the coffin. We need to be sure it is my sister down there.

O'NEILL: Here we are. It's survived intact.

SUE: Did you hear something? Breathing?

O'NEILL: Just the wind.

SUE: I know what to expect. Happy says we need to be certain it is her remains in there.

O'NEILL: Well, if you're sure. Grab the lid. That's right. Look, it's already worked loose. Right, after three.

One, two, three.

(Sue screams.)

[Part Four]

HEX: Is anyone down here?

ACE: Hex? Is that you? I can't see. The cellar light's been switched off.

HEX: The bulb's been taken out. What are you doing down here?

ACE: Tied up.

HEX: You?

ACE: It happens. Once in a blue moon. The Bursar's here too.

HEX: Yeah, I thought she might be. I saw the empty chair in the kitchen. That's why I poked me head in here.

ACE: The boy has learned to use his brain. Woo-hoo! Me and the Doctor, we're rubbing off on you at last.

HEX: Bursar? Are you all right? She's not moving.

ACE: I think she's fainted. Oh, she's probably still affected by that overdose earlier. And we got a fright when that, that thing toppled over.

HEX: What thing?

ACE: I couldn't see. It's too dark.

HEX: Where is it? Ow! Okay. So it's here. Right. Whatever it is, it's wearing a fur coat. Great. Stuck in a cellar with a... Hey, hang on. Maybe it's the stuffed bear from the hall upstairs.

ACE: What's it doing down here, though?

HEX: I don't know. So, I guess it's up to me to do the heroic rescue bit, eh?

ACE: Cheers, mate. And since when do I need rescuing?

HEX: Well, let's see. Er, you got jabbed with drugs, you fell into a bear trap, nearly froze. Shall I go on?

ACE: Not if you want to ever have kids.

HEX: The Bursar's breathing okay, so I think we're better off leaving her here and trying to find the Doctor, yeah?

ACE: Yeah.

O'NEILL: Empty.

SUE: I don't understand.

O'NEILL: Why would anyone bury an empty coffin?

SUE: Oh, sorry for, for screaming, I was just...

O'NEILL: Don't worry, it was entirely natural. I'd have been more worried if you *hadn't* screamed. You're letting your emotions run free again - that's good, healthy.

SUE: Can't we just leave now?

O'NEILL: I know it's hard, but we owe it to the memory of Maude and Eadie to find out what happened here. I promise, as soon as we've done that, we're out of here.

SUE: Okay. On the condition we stay together.

O'NEILL: Try pulling me away. Come on, let's get back to the house.

SUE: Yes.

DOCTOR: So, you had Hartley embalm Eadie's body in the hope you could bring her back to life using the Bartholomew machine.

DICKENS: Our motives were honourable. We felt duty bound to undo the wrong of our earlier mistake. She should never have died. Hartley preserved the body shortly after death. A grave was prepared, but I needed the body to be closer at hand. I knew the others would object. There was a ceremony. A little service led by the Deacon, but the coffin was empty. Hartley and I encased Eadie's corpse in a coffin of sorts, but not one that required burial.

DOCTOR: Explain.

DICKENS: If the time experiment succeeded, we didn't want poor Eadie to awake in a buried coffin, did we? Not burying her was an act of kindness. It was my fault. I misdiagnosed the child. I ordered the lethal anaesthetic. I persuaded the Deacon and Hartley to hold the Bursar here against her will, to use a bear trap on her.

DOCTOR: All this so you can undo your error. No, Major Dickens. You're a military man, you didn't misdiagnose Eadie's condition at all.

DICKENS: I beg your pardon?

DOCTOR: You expect me to believe you misdiagnosed Gravonax poisoning in the girl? Gravonax, one of the most identifiable set of symptoms known to man.

DICKENS: That young woman was an urchin, as was her mother, and sister. No one missed them, just as I calculated. Why do you think I insisted on having the Bartholomew machine in here while we ended her life? Why do you think, Doctor?

DOCTOR: You tricked me into assisting with what I thought was a harmless time experiment. A message warning that the operation on Eadie must be stopped has been transmitted ten years back in time. If the warning is heeded, there will briefly exist two separate outcomes. One with Eadie alive, the other with her dead. Her perfectly preserved body may at this moment be temporarily returning to life. You must tell me where her body truly is.

DICKENS: Only Hartley knew where the body was encased. Imagine it. Somewhere maybe even now, a living corpse is stalking this island. Ten years I have waited for this night. Me, Doctor, the first man in history to kill a living thing and bring it back to life. It will be me, and not Bartholomew, whose name will live in legend. I'll get my commission back, be reinstated in the military. I can supply them with the ability to change any event. Bring any number of people back to life!

DOCTOR: In that case, I have no option but to re-alter time. To travel back ten years and over-ride the harm your message is about to do.

DICKENS: I don't think so, Doctor. Please don't make me hurt you too.

DOCTOR: No chance of that, Major. Like all bores, you love the sound of your own voice too much. So used to giving orders to weak men and disabled women, you forgot to keep your eye on all the balls being juggled, yes?

DICKENS: What on Earth are you talking about, man?

DOCTOR: Mister Hex?

HEX: Hello, Doctor. Major?

DICKENS: What? Oh.

(Thump. Thud.)

DOCTOR: Well done, Hex. Stay with him. Don't let him move an inch. Ace? You're with me.

DOCTOR: Hello down there!

BURSAR: Doctor? I think I fainted.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry, but I've no time to waste. I need to get back to the Tardis. The Major's being held upstairs by Hex. Until I can undo the effects of your dreadfully misguided experiment, there's a great danger that Eadie's body may have regained some kind of consciousness.

BURSAR: How?

DOCTOR: A consequence of dabbling with Time. Ace, you stay and tend to the Bursar.

ACE: Since when did I become Florence Nightingale? That's more Hex's line, surely.

DOCTOR: Strong as you are, he's better equipped at dealing with the Major. Now, listen both of you. There's a strong bolt on this door. I'm going to lock you in. If there is a zombie version of Eadie roaming the island, believe me, you won't want to see it.

ACE: What about Doctor O'Neill? And Sue? Hex said they're somewhere out there in the woods.

DOCTOR: Then they should be very worried.

DICKENS: Good knots those, boy. Oh! Someone's taught you well.

HEX: Experience. So, Major, what's going on exactly?

DICKENS: I have demonstrated that through the use of the Bartholomew Transactor, the dead can be brought back to life. Yes, I killed Eadie, but we needed a death in order to run the experiment. Do you expect me to apologise for such a relatively insignificant sacrifice?

HEX: And Hartley's death? That was you too, I suppose. He had outlived his usefulness, eh?

DICKENS: You won't believe me but I'll tell you this anyway. I am not responsible for the deaths of either Hartley or the Deacon.

HEX: Or hacking his eyes out?

DICKENS: You know, it's only just occurred to me. I mean, Hartley was obsessive about his eyes. Protecting them, I mean. As a taxidermist he needed twenty-twenty vision, but he also collected eyes. Fascinated by them. You may have noticed all his little furry friends dotted around the house have their eyes, no glass replacements.

HEX: Is there a point to this?

DICKENS: When we had finished killing Eadie, he removed her eyes. Maude caught us doing so, and he gloated. We explained that her daughter was part of a time experiment. I realise that was an insensitive thing to do so soon after her daughter's death. But we were high on the adrenalin of discovery.

HEX: You know what's really freaking me out here? You, sat here telling me all this so rationally. I've just tied up a devious clinical psychopath, and now I'm actually listening to what you've got to say. What kind of fool does that make me, eh?

DICKENS: A loyal fool, Hex. Loyal, to the Doctor. I can see he trained you and the girl well. Like soldiers, aren't you? I'm a soldier too. We should be on the same side. We're very similar, you and I. Trained to use our instincts and our intelligence combined.

HEX: Whatever. All that concerns me is that someone pushed Hartley down the cellar steps and killed him. And probably the same someone who injected both the Bursar and Ace with anaesthetic. The someone who gave the Deacon such a fright that she committed suicide.

DICKENS: You think someone here is intent on killing us all?

HEX: Yes. I wonder who they'll go for next, eh, Major?

ACE: How are you feeling, Bursar?

BURSAR: Much better, thank you.

ACE: You fainted when the stuffed bear fell over.

BURSAR: The bear? Down here? We must get out of here, get out of the cellar!

ACE: No, we're in here for our own safety, remember. Zombie Eadie's out looking for brains to brunch on. Anyway, we can't get out. The Doctor bolted us in from the outside.

BURSAR: Hello? Who's there?

ACE: Relax. There's no one else in here. Believe me, I've checked.

BURSAR: Then who picked the bear up?

ACE: What?

BURSAR: You said the bear had toppled over.

ACE: Yeah, I know.

BURSAR: Point the candle over there. Now, what's that, stood with its back to us, hmm?

ACE: M-maybe, maybe the Doctor...

BURSAR: Oh, bless you, Ace, but he's not Superman, and the bear weighs more than you and I together. Hartley was always protective of that bear. Wouldn't let anyone else touch it. The Deacon hated having it on display upstairs, but Hartley insisted. I always wondered why.

ACE: Oh no. You're kidding.

BURSAR: He wanted Eadie's body where he could keep an eye on it, I imagine. Where better to have it than in the main hall, encased in a bear skin. I'm so sorry, Eadie. If you can hear me, I'm so sorry. Don't think my heart will stand much more of this. Ooh, such a pain in my arm.

ACE: Please tell me the bear didn't just move. Bursar? Bursar. Help! For God's sake, somebody help!

BURSAR: I think, I think I'm having a heart attack.

ACE: Bursar, I can hear breathing. Inside the bear skin, I can hear breathing. Help! Someone help! Hex! Doctor!

DEACON: Well done, Eadie. Breathe into the mask. Deep breaths now. You'll not feel any pain. Major

Dickens, I'm ready when you are.

DICKENS: Administering mixture of nitrous oxide, CO2 and cyclopropane. Patient now under and breathing steadily. Check endotracheal tube.

DEACON: Prepare to operate, Mister Hartley, prepare to operate.

HARTLEY: I can't. I'm not qualified. She'd die.

DICKENS: Blood pressure?

DEACON: Normal, Major.

DICKENS: But you must, Mr Hartley. We agreed. It's your turn!

HARTLEY: The Bartholomew machine - it's activated!

DICKENS: Don't be a fool, Hartley. The machine's a prototype. It doesn't work.

BURSAR: Astonishing. Don't you see, Major Dickens? It must be a message from a time that has yet to come. It means the machine does work.

DICKENS [OC]: This is a message from the future.

DEACON: Listen. I hear a faint voice.

DICKENS [OC]: Repeat. This is a message from the future. You are needlessly killing the girl. She does not, repeat not, have Gravonax poisoning.

DEACON: Oh.

DICKENS [OC]: The operation must be terminated.

BURSAR: It was you, Major. It was your voice. There's only one thing for it. Resuscitate the patient.

HARTLEY: But the Major diagnosed...

DEACON: Clearly he was wrong. Resuscitate the patient.

DICKENS: Now, I'm in charge here, and I'm not sure I want to trust a voice from...

(The Tardis materialises nearby.)

DICKENS: What on Earth was that?

BURSAR: It came from downstairs. Listen. Footsteps.

DICKENS: Who the devil are you?

DOCTOR: I'm the Doctor, and I am a messenger from the future.

HARTLEY: How do you do? I'm Joseph Hartley. My colleagues, Major Dickens, the Deacon, and Miss JJ Bartholomew.

DICKENS: Wait a moment. Messenger from the future? This man could be a common thief. I must warn you that this house is alarmed. A system of my own design.

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. All very impressive, Major. Just like your Falklands war record, no doubt. Now, that young lady on the table. Am I to understand her name is Eadie, and you're about to kill her?

DEACON: We were to kill her. We thought she had Gravonax. It was a mercy killing.

BURSAR: We were stopped by a message received through the Bar...

DOCTOR: Bartholomew machine. Yes, I am fully aware of the machine, Miss Bartholomew.

HARTLEY: If you are from the future, your job has already been done. You presumably came to tell us to revive Eadie? We're already doing so.

DOCTOR: Gentlemen, ladies, the voice you heard through the Bartholomew machine was indeed from the future, but it was the result of a dreadful trick played on you by Major Dickens. The rest of you, I'm afraid, will either die or be seriously injured as a result.

DICKENS: This really is the most obnoxious slander I have ever heard.

DOCTOR: Admit it, Major. You've tricked them all into conducting a vulgar experiment with Time.

DICKENS: I do not admit it. Eadie must live.

DOCTOR: No. The message I bring you is Eadie must die.

BURSAR: What?

DOCTOR: I'm, sorry, but history has been written, however unsavoury. To tamper with it now will unleash all sorts of future unpleasantness.

DEACON: You're seriously telling us that Eadie does not have Gravonax poisoning, and yet we must still kill her?

DOCTOR: For the sake of the future, yes.

BURSAR: We utterly refuse. Major Dickens, remove the anaesthetic mask. Revive the girl.

DEACON: What you're asking of us is immoral.

DOCTOR: No more immoral than bringing that poor girl's expertly-embalmed corpse back to life inside... Where were you planning to hide the corpse, Hartley?

DICKENS: Don't tell him, Hartley.

DOCTOR: Tell me, Mister Hartley, please.

HARTLEY: Very well. It's the bear. We planned to put the body once embalmed in the stuffed bear in the hall.

DEACON: We? We planned? I have no part in this.

BURSAR: The patient is conscious.

DOCTOR: I had hoped to persuade you, but clearly I have failed. Stand back, everyone.

DICKENS: Carbon monoxide? You'll kill her in two minutes flat.

DOCTOR: As you, Major Dickens, were prepared to do only five minutes ago.

HARTLEY: But then we believed the patient was dying anyway.

BURSAR: We thought we were doing the right thing.

DOCTOR: You didn't think you were doing the right thing, the Major told you you were doing the right thing. None of you actually did any thinking at all.

DEACON: Now we know we are doing the *wrong* thing. You cannot kill a perfectly healthy patient. It's murder.

DOCTOR: I had thought you might say that. Deacon, read this.

DEACON: It's my handwriting. But I swear I have never written such a thing. And it's dated...

DOCTOR: It's dated exactly ten years into the future. Deacon, it is your suicide note.

DEACON: (reads) I hereby certify that I am taking my own life. No one else is involved, and no one else should be punished. Ten years ago I made a terrible error of judgement, and God alone will be my judge. My one wish is that I am not mourned. No funeral, no flowers, no fuss. You will all know what this means.

DOCTOR: Now do I make myself clear?

ACE: Bursar, if you really think that's Eadie, I'd appreciate any help you can give right now.

BURSAR: Eadie, if you can hear me, if you can register my voice, heed this. It is me whom you wish to harm, not Ace. I am the one who invented the machine that has brought you to life. I am the one who should be punished.

(Scream cut off by a crash.)

ACE: Bursar! Are you okay?

(Door opens.)

ACE: Doctor! Hex!

DOCTOR: And in the nick of time, it seems.

ACE: The bear. It was alive.

HEX: How long's the Bursar been dead?

ACE: Oh no. She was okay until just now. She goaded the bear away from me.

HEX: The bear must have fallen on top of her. There's not much I can do for her, I'm afraid.

DOCTOR: Come along. Time we got ready to say goodbye.

HEX: In the end, I was forced to tie the Major's arms and legs to the operating table in the attic.

ACE: You were afraid he might kill you?

HEX: No, I was afraid I might kill him .

ACE: Huh.

HEX: Why'd he do it, Doctor? You know, send the message back through time, telling them to do the exact opposite of what he really wanted?

DOCTOR: Major Dickens knew himself better than anyone else.

ACE: Well, duh.

DOCTOR: He knew that if he was told to do one thing, he most likely would do the opposite. Basically , beneath the bluster, cold-hearted avarice and unpleasant breath, Dickens was also an evil and callous individual who deliberately wanted to create a time paradox so that Eadie's ghost would return to life.

HEX: Why?

DOCTOR: He wanted to be the first person in history to awake the dead, and he relished the prospect of the mayhem and unhappiness he'd generate. Very sad and deluded individual.

ACE: Didn't like him much, did you?

DOCTOR: Mmm.

HEX: Hey, look, a fire. Doctor O'Neill! Sue! Ruth, I mean.

(A fire burning.)

O'NEILL: We're burning the stuffed bear. Not much of it left now.

HEX: It's hard to believe it had a body in it. You know, we thought we'd see some skeletal remains. Oh, sorry, mate. That wasn't very sensitive.

O'NEILL: Not at all. We checked. There was nothing inside after all.

ACE: But there must have been. It moved.

O'NEILL: Hartley put mechanics inside some of his animals. Maybe some clockwork mechanism sprang to life.

ACE: But we heard it...

DOCTOR: Do you notice that? A large rip along the bear's back.

HEX: Like someone was trying to cut their way in.

O'NEILL: Or cut their way out.

HEX: Sue, it was you in the hoodie, singing those nursery rhymes. And you injected Ace with the syringe, didn't ya?

SUE: I swear I didn't do anything, and I don't have a hoodie, thank you very much.

O'NEILL: Maude loved them. Pink ones, blue ones. Used to take the girls out jogging in them when they were younger. You won't remember, Sue. I mean, Ruth.

DOCTOR: Anyway, come along. You two have a boat to catch.

O'NEILL: I'll get the police to come back for the Major. Are you sure you don't need a lift?

ACE: No, ta.

SUE: Thanks, everyone.

O'NEILL: Off we go.

SUE: Dad, I left Happy behind. We should go back.

O'NEILL: Are you sure?

SUE: No. No, don't need him any more. Bye, all.

HEX: See ya.

ACE: They seemed really happy. A new life together away from the island.

HEX: Yeah, but I still reckon Ruth was doing the weird stuff. She knew exactly what had gone on in that house, and wanted to scare them into coming clean. She even had a tape recorder to tape the Doctor's voice.

DOCTOR: That is one interpretation of events.

ACE: And the other?

DOCTOR: The first experiment with the Bartholomew device was on the night we arrived. Because the power had failed halfway through, they judged the experiment unsuccessful. But suppose it was not unsuccessful?

HEX: Yeah. Suppose Eadie's body returned to life that night? Suppose she had ripped her way out of the bear skin in the hall, and staggered semi-consciously to the lake, drawn perhaps by some inner sense that this was where her mother had drowned? An inhuman being in a semi-zombie state.

ACE: What, with some residual sense of feeling, memory and even intuition? Yeah, then what? She staggers to the lakeside and finds her mother's discarded coat, scaring me in the process? Suppose she climbed back into the bear skin, emerging only when she thought the house was empty.

DOCTOR: Couldn't have put it better myself. Well done, both of you.

HEX: So maybe it was Eadie who killed Hartley, and made the Deacon kill herself.

ACE: And killed the Bursar by falling on her!

DOCTOR: You did say someone in the wood steered you away from the bear traps, Ace.

HEX: We're not being serious, Doctor!

DOCTOR: Maybe you should be.

HEX: Yeah, well. Anyway, she didn't mean us any 'arm. She was only after people who killed her. It seems a bit wrong that the Major Dickens was the only one to live, though.

DOCTOR: Hex, no matter what people have done, never ever wish them dead. We're not vigilantes. The police will be here soon. He can't get away, assuming you listened to my knot-tying lessons?

ACE: Always knew they'd come in useful.

HEX: Whatever. Look, you said the effects of the Bartholomew machine were fleeting, so why did Eadie's corpse stay alive so long?

DOCTOR: That's what puzzles me. Usually it lasts a minute or so at the most, and then perhaps if the will to live was strong enough, the period of life would be extended. Unless of course...

ACE: What?

DOCTOR: Most unlikely, but suppose Eadie had discovered a way of operating the Bartholomew Transactor. She could have set it to repeat the experiment.

ACE: Fire loads of messages back in time.

DOCTOR: If that were the case, she would stay alive for as long as she wished.

ACE: Hang on. You went back in time and stopped them reviving Eadie. That's the whole point. Eadie's ghost was only here because of the Bartholomew machine.

HEX: Yeah, that's right. You over-ruled the result of the experiment by travelling back in time and killing Eadie.

DOCTOR: I tried to kill her.

HEX: Tried to?

DOCTOR: I couldn't do it. I couldn't bring myself to kill a living being.

HEX: But that means...

DOCTOR: If the lecturers' first time experiment on the night we arrived had reignited Eadie's mummified body, and if somehow it had managed to climb out of the bear skin, and if for some bizarre reason the time patterns have not yet settled down sufficiently to return things to a status quo, then a zombie form of Eadie could still be on the loose in Sibley Hall. But in my view, three ifs rarely amount to anything in science.

Anyway, we're nearly at the Tardis. And then, I have important envelope to post.

HEX: What? To the editor of the New Scientist? What's in it?

DOCTOR: The Bursar's unpublished thesis. Take a look. Erratic, self-indulgent, but brilliant. One of the best such papers I have ever read. Now that JJ Bartholomew is dead, I have a duty to see that her theory on time travel reaches the widest possible audience. It would otherwise change the entire course of time, and that is something I could never allow.

(Four o'clock.)

DICKENS: Hello? Is that the police? It's me, Dickens. Where have you got to?! Should have been here ages ago, damn it! Now, listen to me. There's been a terrible misunderstanding. I've been tied to this table by a young lout who...

(Door opens, slow footsteps, heavy breathing.)

DICKENS: Oh. Oh. How have... Oh, my God. Your eyes. Where in blazes are your eyes?

HAPPY: Hello, Major Dickens. I'm Happy.

DICKENS: This, this is not possible.

HAPPY: All things are possible here, Major. I want to tell you a story.

DICKENS: Keep away from me. Put down... put that down. Those are very sharp. Listen. We can... Release my hands, and we can talk. We have shared memories. Shared knowledge. I can tell you all about your past. Oh no. Keep away from my eyes. No, not my eyes. I beg you. Anything but my...

(Screams, squishy sounds, whistles Oranges and Lemons.)